

Message Text

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PAGE 01 NASSAU 00977 301939Z

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SUBJ: B-1 VISA FEES

REF: NASSAU 1880, 12/5/73; NASSAU 310, 4/2/72 AND PREVIOUS

1. RESPONDING TO A BAHAMIAN DECISION TO LEVY A \$300 FEE FOR A ONE YEAR WORK PERMIT FOR US CITIZEN SALESMEN TRAVELLING TO THE BAHAMAS, THE DEPARTMENT IN JULY 1972 INSTITUTED A RECIPROCAL FEE OF \$300 FOR A ONE YEAR MULTIPLE ENTRY B-1 NIV FOR BEARS OF BAHAMIAN PASSPORTS.

2. IN REVIEWING SITUATION CREATED BY UNITED STATES RECIPROCAL STEP WE HAVE CONCLUDED:

(A) ARRANGEMENT WORKS TO DISADVANTAGE OF U.S. IN EXPORT TERMS -- U.S. CITIZEN SALESMEN ARE TRAVELLING TO THE BAHAMAS TO SELL AND ARE NOT RELUCTANT TO PAY THE BAHAMIAN WORK PERMIT FEES TO DO SO. BAHAMIAN BUSINESS VISA APPLICANT, WHOSE INTENTION IS TO PURCHASE GOODS AND SERVICES IS OFTEN DETERRED BY \$300 B-1 VISA FEE. THUS, US IS PLACING OBSTACLE IN PATH OF ITS OWN IMPORTANT EXPORT INTERESTS.

(B) US HAS RECIPROCATED IN MANNER THAT IS BROADER THAN BAHAMIAN REGULATIONS TO WHICH US IS RESPONDING, E.G. US CORPORATE REPRESENTATIVES TRAVELLING TO THE BAHAMAS TO CONSUL CLIENTS, CORPORATE REPRESENTATIVES TRAVELLING TO ESTABLISH BAHAMIAN UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 02 NASSAU 00977 301939Z

DISTRIBUTORSHIPS, AND US ATTORNEYS HERE TO MEET LOCAL REPRE-

SENTATIVES ARE NOT REQUIRED TO PAY \$300.

(C) US UNABLE ALSO TO EMPLOY FLEXIBILITY BAHAMIAN REGULATIONS PROVIDE FOR, E.G., THREE MONTH BAHAMIAN WORK PERMITS ARE AVAILABLE AT 1/4 THE ANNUAL FEE, I.E. \$75.

3. SINCE THE SITUATION CREATED BY RECIPROCITY HAS WORKED TO OUR DISADVANTAGE, EMBASSY HAS BEEN CONSULTING FORMALLY AND INFORMALLY WITH THE APPROPRIATE BAHAMIAN GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS TO SEEK MUTUAL WITHDRAWAL OF FEES FOR TRAVELLING BUSINESSMEN. TO DATE THESE APPROACHES HAVE BEEN WITHOUT SUCCESS AS BAHAMIANS BELIEVE WORK PERMIT REGULATIONS OF SOME SORT ARE REQUIRED TO CONTROL ENTRY OF SALESMEN, AND THEY ARE NOT CONCERNED WITH RECIPROCAL STEP TAKEN BY U.S. SINCE THEY TOO SEE THAT IT IS CASE FOR CONCERN FOR US NOT FOR THEM.

4. EMBASSY WILL CONTINUE TO PRESS BAHAMIAN GOVERNMENT TO ELIMINATE FEES, BUT INASMUCH AS WE DO NOT EXPECT BAHAMIANS TO AGREE TO SUCH A STEP, WE RECOMMEND THAT CAREFUL CONSIDERATION BE GIVEN TO A UNILATERAL ELIMINATION OF THE B-1 FEE WE ARE CHARGING BAHAMIAN BUSINESSMEN. WE WOULD HOPE IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE TO EMPLOY THE "IF PRACTICABLE" FLEXIBILITY IN SECTION 281(C) OF THE IMMIGRATION AND NATIONALITY ACT TO AUTHORIZE SUCH A STEP AND THE DISADVANTAGES TO THE US CITED ABOVE TO JUSTIFY IT.

5. DEPARTMENT'S COMMENTS REQUESTED.
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